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ABSTRACT

No living American satirist has pushed the limits of satire--perhaps the most extreme form of expression that society has tolerated--further than Garry Trudeau, who draws the comic strip "Doonesbury." Newspaper editors regularly pull the strip, alter it, or accompany it with a disclaimer when they think it is unfair or libelous. And the public figures he satirizes frequently react with public indignation. In order to understand their reactions better, a study examined the content of Trudeau's controversial strips over two decades. Findings showed that though Trudeau frequently makes political commentary, he also satirizes social issues which other comic strip artists would consider too sensitive, i.e. Congressional sex scandals, vigilante killers, drug use, revolutions in foreign countries, and unmarried couples living together. Trudeau's satire constantly tests the limits of taste, fairness, and appropriateness. But that is what satirists are supposed to do: direct their own incredulity, anger, or morality at whatever most outrages them. While "Doonesbury" regularly tests the limits of satire, and frequently goes over the line of taste, its popularity is strong enough for now so that the strip has lost little of its bite. (One hundred and four notes and 13 figures are included.) (MS)

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DOONESBURY AND THE LIMITS OF SATIRE

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Presented to the Visual Communications Division at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications Convention in Portland, Oregon, July 1988.

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ABSTRACT

DOONESBURY AND THE LIMITS OF SATIRE

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Through history satire has been perhaps the most extreme form of expression that society has tolerated. Satirists criticize without fairness or decency, and in return, their targets have often gone to great lengths to stifle the satirist. No living American satirist has pushed the limits of satire further than Garry Trudeau and his "Doonesbury" comic strip. Newspaper editors regularly pull the strip, alter it, or accompany it with a disclaimer when they think it is unfair or libelous. And the public figures he satirizes frequently react with public indignation. This article considers the limits of satire by examining "Doonesbury" over nearly two decades.

Presented to the Visual Communications Division at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications Convention in Portland, Oregon, July 1988.

"Satire is what closes Saturday night."
George S. Kaufman.1

DOONESBURY AND THE LIMITS OF SATIRE

It is the nature of satirists to attack without fairness, decency or regards to taste. All satire is not only an attack, it is an attack upon discernible, historically authentic particulars. The reader must be able to point to the world of reality, past or present, and identify the person or thing that the satirist is condemning.2 Satire gives us not literal truth but rhetoric, not transcriptions of reality but revealing distortions based on an appearance of reality.3 Satirists distort in order to hammer home what they regard as the essential truth about an individual.4

It is the satirist's intent to make his victim "suffer," whether through their own injured awareness or through the ridicule or hostility that the satire creates in the minds of others.5 If it is perceived as unfair, there is likely to be a counterattack by either the victim or an offended third party. Satirists have been sued, censored, jailed and even murdered for their works. Others have found difficulty getting an "offensive" satire published, or perhaps finding outlets to have their works published in the future. Satire may be at its best when it is at its cruelest and this is also when it is likely to draw the most intense reaction.

No living American satirist has probably pushed the limits of satire further than Garry Trudeau, who draws the comic strip "Doonesbury." Newspaper editors regularly pull the strip, alter it,

or accompany it with a disclaimer when they think it is unfair or libelous. And the public figures he satirizes frequently react with public indignation.

This article will consider the limits of satire by examining "Doonesbury" over nearly two decades. It will be necessary to consider the content of his controversial strips in order to better understand their reaction. What cartoons have caused the greatest furor? What has been the reaction? What attempts have been made to restrict the offending strip? To do so, it will be necessary to examine as much as possible the strips that have met with disapproval, either on the part of the public figure who was satirized or on the part of newspaper editors who refused to publish them. Also, what has been the reaction of readers when their newspaper has not published a "Doonesbury" series, for whatever reason? It will first be necessary to provide a context for the limits of satire. This will be done two ways: One, by summarizing how satirists, historically, have been punished for their art and writing; and secondly, by considering those measures taken in this country to subvert political cartoonists.

Garry Trudeau is a satirist whose medium is the comic strip. "Doonesbury" is published in about 900 newspapers with a daily circulation estimated at 80 million.6 In his study of comic strips, Inge wrote, any phenomenon that plays so heavily on the sensibility of the American populace deserves study purely for sociological reasons if for no other.7 "Doonesbury" also satirizes issues, i.e. politics, sex and religion, that would probably be considered too sensitive for other comic strips. By using biting

satire within the friendly confines of a comic strip, "Doonesbury" draws a comparison to Walt Kelly's "Pogo." Mishkin wrote that Kelly took the usually secure world of the "funny animal" strip and bristled its furry edges in an artistic examination of life around him.8 "Pogo" was more than a reflection of the America it satirized, it challenged readers to become more socially aware.9

In 1975 Trudeau became the first comic strip artist to win a Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning.10 But strictly speaking, he is not an editorial cartoonist -- not like Pat Oliphant, Paul Conrad or Herbert Block. They satirize the front page stories or the lead story on the six o'clock news, and their cartoons appear either on a newspaper's editorial or op-ed page. Though Trudeau does frequently make political commentary -- he also satirizes fashions and football, college life and married life. "Doonesbury" is a comic strip, yet he satirizes that which other comic strip artists would probably consider too sensitive: Congressional sex scandals, vigilante killers, drug use, revolutions in foreign countries and unmarried couples living together. While some newspaper editors put it with the other strips on the comics pages, others are more comfortable with it on the op-ed page.

The Limits of Satire, Historically

The tradition of satire goes back to the Greek Archilochus, who in the seventh century B.C., "was the first who dipt a bitter Muse in snake-venom."11 From the beginning, the satirist has skated on the thin edge of censorship and legal retribution.12 Among those early writers punished for their satire were Daedalus,

who was imprisoned, Wieland and Hephaestus, who were crippled, and Prometheus, who was chained to a rock.13 In 1599 the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London issued an order prohibiting the printing of any satires thereafter and requiring already published satirical works to be burned.14 After publishing "The Shortest Way With Dissenters" in 1703, a biting satire of England, Daniel Defoe was sentenced to three times in the pillory and to pay a fine of 200 marks.15

Portrait caricature, that is, the deliberate distortion of a particular individual's features for purposes of laughter or mockery, came into being as an art form no earlier than the end of the sixteenth century.16 By the eighteenth century, graphic artists, most notably William Hogarth, were beginning to employ the devices of caricature -- monstrous distortion and gross exaggeration -- in their observations of the political and social scene.17 But -- as satirists always have done -- caricaturists published at their own peril. Honore Daumier was sentenced to jail after his paintings had insulted King Louis Phillipe; Aristiode Delanoy was jailed for a year after attacking Briand and Clemenceau in the satiric weekly, *L'Assiette au Beurre*; and in Germany, the Kaiser's underlings confiscated George Grosz's portfolio of sacrilegious prints and fined the artist 500 marks.18

"A good caricature," said a nineteenth-century American artist, "is only fully appreciated by those who have been its victims."19 New York City political boss William Tweed, the target of an intense campaign of scurrilous cartoons drawn by Thomas Nast, once summarized the simple potency of a political cartoon by

saying, "I don't care what they print about me. Most of my constituents can't read. But them damn pictures!"20 To discourage Nast from attacking his political machine, Tweed tried unsuccessfully to bribe him.21

In an attempt to curb the growing wave of political cartoonists at the turn of the century, California and Pennsylvania passed laws restricting the expression of cartoons.22 Before being amended in its final form, the Pennsylvania anti-cartoon bill made it a crime to draw any person "in the form or likeness of beast, bird, fish, insect, or other inhuman animal."23 During World War I, three socialist cartoonists were among those in the United States indicted for sedition.24

Walt Kelly's running caricature of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover angered Hoover, who ordered cryptanalysts to search the cartoonist's "Pogo" strip for hidden messages -- in codes.25 In 1954, Kelly invented a character called Simple J. Malarky, who looked and fulminated so much like Senator Joseph McCarthy that several newspapers took offense and dropped the strip on the grounds that the comics should not be preachy.26 In the early 1960s, during the Cold War, Kelly drew Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev as a sloppy, medal-wearing, hog with a strong Russian dialect and Cuban Premier Fidel Castro as a bearded, cigar-smoking goat with a Spanish accent. This offended some who scolded Kelly for subverting the peace process.27 Newspapers -- both domestic and foreign -- registered their disapproval by not publishing the series.28

When newspaper editors protested Kelly's caricatures of political candidates in 1968 -- namely Lyndon Johnson as a nearsighted longhorn steer -- he began drawing substitute strips "full of cute, little bunny rabbits" to be used in place of offending material.29 He quit this practice after a few years, saying, "If a paper's going to drop me, let them."30

He was less conciliatory when it came to having his strips edited. In a strip that appeared during National Education Week in 1958, a butterfly said to the "Pogo" possum, "This is National Education Week an' everybody ought to finish their education." Whereupon, the possum replied, "Some places 'round here, education is perty well finished." While many Southern newspapers refused to publish the strip, the Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch merely deleted the offending Pogoism.31 The newspaper's editor defended his right to edit comic strips. Kelly disagreed: "Once my name and copyright are on the strips, I am responsible for what is said in them and how it is said. I'd be willing to let 519 papers go to hell if they want to insist on a right -- which they do not have -- to edit my copy."32

There are only about 170 political cartoonists working in the United States, and they are limited by a number of things, not the least of which is opportunity.33 If they do get hired, they are limited by the policies and tastes of the newspaper they work. In order to see that the policy of the paper is maintained or that readers or advertisers are not offended, editors are likely to periodically curb the cartoonist's freedom. "The cartoonist is fortunate who has an editor who either agrees with him all the way

or who respects the cartoonist's position enough to give him free reign," one cartoonist has said.34 Few cartoonists are so fortunate.35

Newspapers also do not regularly publish cartoons that could be construed as libelous. Despite repeated assurances from the courts that cartoons are protected expressions, lawsuits against political cartoonists are proliferating, and with that comes a rise in the cost of defending them.36 This worries cartoonists who feel that this can take its toll on editorial policy. "It's become a dollar and cents thing, and that's what the publisher looks at," Boston Globe cartoonist Paul Szep says. "Eventually, the publisher is going to say, 'We can't do that guy because he'll probably sue, and we don't want to get into that.'"37 Plaintiffs in libel suits usually try to show that a communication has harmed their reputation. But for a political cartoonist, said Philadelphia Inquirer Executive Editor Eugene Roberts, "that's not a definition of libel, that's a job description. That's what they're supposed to do, and if they can't do that we've got a problem in this country."38

"Doonesbury"

"Doonesbury" is to the 1970s and 1980s what "Pogo" was to the 1950s and 1960s -- an innovative strip that carries a variety of social and personal messages to its readers who reject the widely held and fallacious bit of folk belief that the readership of the country hovers somewhere in the vicinity of the thirteen-year-old idiot who creeps wetly around on all fours.39 The New Republic

said, "the closest thing to satire with teeth that the culture is sustaining is 'Doonesbury,' and Trudeau's getting away with it because his medium is the comic strip, and, ergo, not recognizable as a serious form."40

Trudeau began drawing "Doonesbury" while a student at Yale, and it is there where many of his characters have their roots. Trudeau's Michael Doonesbury was self-inspired; "Megaphone Mark" Slackmeyer was Trudeau's answer to Yale radical Mark Zanger; the Reverend Scot Sloane to former Yale chaplain William Sloane Coffin Jr.,; and B.D., the quarterback, to Yale quarterback Brian Dowling.41 Former Congresswoman Millicent Fenwick was the inspiration for Congresswoman Lacey Davenport.42 And Uncle Duke is a thinly disguised parody of counter-culture journalist Hunter Thompson. The "Doonesbury" cast also includes the laid back Zonker Harris; Joanie Caucus, the feminist; Rick Redfern, The Washington Post reporter; and Roland Burton Hedley, the dimwitted newsman.

In the early 1980s, Trudeau announced that he thought his characters needed to do some growing up, so he took an hiatus, "to graduate them and move them into the larger world of grown-up concerns."43 Gloria Steinham wrote that "unlike most of his comic colleagues who refuse to let their characters age, much less change their minds or personal styles, Trudeau's people grow, take on new ideas, change their jobs and even their personal worlds."44 Hendley compared the satire of Trudeau to that of Horace.

> In their use of vital comic traditions, believable and yet running character types, in their gentle mockery and avoidance of the righteous indignation characteristic of satire, in their keen ear for the idiod of daily speech, and their variety, the two show how even the seemingly

> disparate can be profitably joined together. Just as Horace minutely examined the society of his own day, Trudeau forces us to look at ourselves not as we would like to be but as we are.45

In "Doonesbury," the real and fictive combine and blend into commentary -- and the results are often closer to the truth than mere news reports.46 Like any satirist, Trudeau uses distortion and hyperbole to make his point. But everything he says is based a central truth. His characters react to real events and real stories. Trudeau's satire of society makes some readers and editors uncomfortable because he draws attention not only to the nakedness of our kings but to our own nakedness.

For instance, several newspapers did not publish a 1976 strip that showed an unmarried couple in bed together.47 The same thing happened to a 1985 strip about spring break that included a tangle of male and female students in a Florida motel room.48 The day after Trudeau finished a series on Reverend Scot Sloane's visit to Teheran where more than 50 Americans were being held hostage, several Marines were killed in a rescue attempt. Trudeau rewrote the series and submitted it again after the passions of the tragedy had subsided.49

"Satiric" fiction is the satirist's distorted interpretation of reality. Trudeau takes what is going on in the news and twists it to draw his own conclusion. He says he is "interested in what the outsider sees -- the public face the politician chooses to project, chooses to be judged on, nothing could be fairer. He's setting the agenda. I'm merely reacting to it."50 Others disagree, and say his interpretations go too far. When he goes beyond the

limits, which are almost entirely subjective, of fair criticism or good taste, he is likely to draw a reaction. This happens frequently though the reaction varies.

"Doonesbury" was censured by the G.O.P. Caucus of the Virginia General Assembly after a series satirized Senator-elect John Warner and his wife, Elizabeth Taylor, who was described as "a tad overweight, but with violet eyes to die for."51 (See Figure 1) The strip also satirized the circumstances in which Warner became senator.52 (See Figure 2) Warner later said, "The facts in the strip are totally false and inaccurate. Oh, I'm not going to pick them up. The people of Virginia know the facts."53 The sponsor of the censure announced, "I don't think we should sit placidly by and let the gnomes of the world run over us without expressing indignation."54

Trudeau's targets are both Democrats and Republicans, and thus, he has drawn fire from officials and supporters in both parties. Democratic Congressman Tip O'Neill tried to head off a couple of series about him. One concerned a dubious nursing-home deal the speaker with which the congressman allegedly had been indirectly linked.55 The other was a mail-in coupon satirizing O'Neill's involvement with the Tongsun Park Koreangate scandal. (See Figure 3). 56

During the 1984 Presidential Election, Trudeau chided Vice President George Bush's flip-flopping on issues by drawing the vice president putting his manhood in a blind trust. In the cartoon, Bush was queried whether the manhood would be "earning interest" while in the blind trust. The vice president answered, "Very

little. There's not that much capital." (See Figure 4) The real Bush responded bitterly. "Gary Trudeau is coming out of deep left field. The American people are going to be speaking out, and we'll see whether they side with Trudeau or the Reagan-Bush message."57 When Trudeau again drew attention to what he perceived as lack of depth in the character of the vice president, by drawing him as nothing more than his words. Bush responded by calling Trudeau "one of the great elitists of all time."58

When Trudeau satirized a network news story that said California Governor Jerry Brown had once solicited a political contribution from an alleged organized-crime figure, several newspapers canceled the strip.59 Brown reacted by calling the strip "false and libelous." Brown, however, declined to press the issue further, saying that "the First Amendment allows libel by the press."60

While the First Amendment does not allow libel, the U.S. Supreme Court has extended the level of protection for criticism against public officials, 61 public figures, 62 and matters of public interest.63 In its landmark *Gertz* decision in 1974, the Court also extended protection to opinion by writing, "there is no such thing as a false idea."64 And as recently as 1988, in *Hustler Magazine v. Falwell*, the Court voted unanimously to protect parody, or that which is pure opinion, even if it is in extreme taste.65

But the Court reiterated its past position that communication that revealed a false statement of fact is not protected.66 This is problematic for political cartoonists, or satirists of any kind, whose job it is to distort facts. However, if the distortion

renders the cartoon unbelievable, it is considered protected because reputation can not be damaged by a communication no one could believe.67 In *Keller v. Miami Herald*, a Florida court said in 1987, "Cartoonists emply hyperbole, exaggeration, and caricature to communicate their message to the reader. One cannot reasonably interpret a cartoon as literally depicting an actual event or situation."68 Courts have generally taken the view that cartoons are "rhetorical hyperbole," and thus protected.69 Courts also have protected satire that is based on news reports.70

Trudeau has yet to be sued for libel. But sensitive editors periodically decide to not publish a "Doonesbury," edit it or ran it with a disclaimer -- not just to ward off a possible suit but because comic strips should be fair.71 Unlike other comic strips, however, "Trudeau often deals with real people and makes specific charges. You have to treat it as if it were a story," said Los Angeles Times Editor William Thomas, who did not publish a "Doonesbury" strip in which radio commentator Mark Slackmeyer gave name after name of former Reagan Administration officials who resigned or were fired after charges of legal or ethical misconduct.72 In the first of the series, Slackmeyer says, "So here it is, the definitive list of backscratchers, till-dippers and conscience-cutters, the unabridged 1986 'Sleaze on Parade.'" (See Figure 5).

While Trudeau based his strip on a report prepared by a House subcommittee, there was one error: the resignation of a former director of the federal Office of Surface Mining, James Harris, was inaccurately reported.73 While the syndicate that distributes

"Doonesbury," Universal Press Syndicate, sent word to subscribers of the error, according to one newspaper editor, it "severely undermined" the paper's confidence in the rest of the strips' accuracy.74

While some newspapers -- like the Los Angeles Times -- simply decided not to publish the strip, several others edited the cartoon's text, deleting those names that they could not independently verify or were convinced were inaccurately depicted. Explained one newspaper editor, James Squires, of the Chicago Tribune, said, "I don't want to be in the position of doing a research project on my comic strips."75 The Washington Post published the strips unchanged, except for the Harris correction, "because it is political satire" and the information upon which Trudeau based the series "has been out and around for some time."76

A 1985 "Doonesbury" series that satirized an anti-abortion film, "The Silent Scream," was considered so sensitive that Universal Press Syndicate decided not to circulate the series.77 In one strip, a television announcer says, "In 'Silent Scream,' we showed you the termination of a 12-week-old pregnancy. Tonight, we'll be witnessing the end of a 12-minute-old pregnancy." (See Figure 6) Another strip included this from the newscaster: "As the moment approaches, Timmy (the name given to the fetus) seems almost oblivious to the charged debate that attends his fate. . . . The final seconds, by studying his mouth through stop-action imaging, we can determine Timmy's final words, which are almost certainly, Repeal Roe v. Wade.'" (See Figure 7).

Universal Syndicate's editorial director explained said the decision not to circulate the strip was made because, "the whole question of abortion was so sensitive that it would cause too many problems for editors."78 The series then appeared in The New Republic.79

A month after the abortion series was withdrawn, Trudeau satirized President Reagan's decision to give singer Frank Sinatra the Medal of Freedom and a subsequent decision by New Jersey's Stevens Institute of Technology to award the singer an honorary degree. In the first three panels of one strip in the series, Trudeau satirized the speech awarding Sinatra the honorary diploma, "He has carried on his craft with distinction and high professionalism. He has applied his talents to the benefit of mankind ... And to the uplifting of the human spirit." In the final panel, there is a photograph taken in the mid-1960s of Sinatra with reported mobster, Aniello Dellacroce, accompanied by the words, "Dr. Francis Sinatra uplifting the spirits of alleged human Aniello Dellacroce, later charged with the murder of Gambino family member Charley Calise." (See Figure 8)

Other strips in the series portrayed Sinatra as foul-mouthed and vulgar. One had Sinatra threatening to have a blackjack dealer dismissed if she shuffled the cards before dealing. This was based on 1984 testimony in which a New Jersey casino commissioner said that Sinatra had intimidated a dealer into dealing from her hand, which is illegal in New Jersey, rather than from a plastic box.80 (See Figure 9)

Once the series began running, Sinatra s lawyers demanded a list of the newspapers that carry "Doonesbury" from Universal Press Syndicate so they could seek retractions.81 The syndicate refused to accommodate the request.82 While Sinatra's lawyers at first threatened legal action against Trudeau and Universal Press, they ultimately backed off. Sinatra, however, did release a public statement saying that Trudeau's work was created "without regard to fairness or decency."83

About 30 newspapers did not print part or all the series even after assurances from the syndicate's lawyer that it was not libelous.84 A few merely refused to publish the Dellacroce strip on the grounds that the caption failed to point out that Dellacroce had been acquitted of the 1974 murder.85 The Washington Post ran the series but included a separate story explaining Dellacroce's acquittal (and his subsequent indictment on racketeering charges).86 Other editors blue-penciled out the reference to the Calise murder. The New York Daily News called Dellacroce "underboss of Gambino family," a designation the paper based on past testimony by federal prosecutors.87 The newspaper's editor explained that if a reporter had handed in the same information, "we would have made him add that Delacroce was later acquitted."88

But Newsweek said that Trudeau was not a reporter and "Doonesbury" was not a news story, nor even an editorial. "One could argue," the magazine said, "that the whole point of political cartoons and strips is to be biting -- and occasional tastelessness and even unfairness go with the territory."89 Also, while editors are free to publish the series or not, they are not free to edit

it. Those who buy it sign a contract stating they will not change it.90

A newspaper may be less likely to publish a syndicated cartoon over one drawn by its own cartoonist. This limits a cartoonist like Trudeau, who works solely through syndication. Also, even if an editor knows a cartoon is not libelous, he may not publish it because of its lack of fairness. But, "criticizing a political satirist for being unfair is like criticizing a 260-pound nose guard for being too physical," Trudeau once said.91

Yet it is the editors who are responsible for what goes in their newspapers. They are the ones who must make value judgments every day as to what goes in the paper or what does not go in, and where it goes and on what page if it does go in. They are the ones who must face the fallout if the newspaper is sued for libel. Even if the article or cartoon is defensible against libel, editors also worry about offending readers and advertisers. Being a satirist, he is more likely to draw or write something that an editor might choose not to run because the subject matter might be inappropriate. Newspapers editors periodically decide against publishing "'Doonesburys.'"

For instance, the Los Angeles Times yanked a 1972 strip about a diplomatic visit by President Richard Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to a distant and alien land: Watts.92 A number of newspapers dropped a 1980 strip in which Trudeau called President Ford's son Jack a "pothead" even though he had once admitted to smoking marijuana.93 The same thing happened to a strip when he had Henry Kissinger appearing on "This Is Your Life,"

while figures from his past reminisced. Marlo Thomas, who had once dated Kissinger, said: "I'm reminded of the many children who were maimed and killed during the Christmas bombings of Bach Mai Hospital." "But ... that's awful," the host replied. And Thomas then said, "You bet! Why do you think we stopped dating!" (See Figure 10) 94

Another time Trudeau exceeded the bounds of fairness, in the opinion of many editors, came in a Nixon-era strip in which Mark Slackmeyer concluded a brief "Watergate Profile" of Attorney General John Mitchell with the remark that "everything known to date could lead one to conclude that he's guilty, guilty, guilty!" (See Figure 11) Trudeau later explained that he was only trying to parody the hysteria of Nixon foes but dozens of papers excised the panels. In an editorial, The Washington Post said, "If anyone is going to find any defendant guilty, it's going to be the due process of justice, not a comic-strip artist. We cannot have one standard for the news pages and another for the comics."95

After Trudeau returned from his 21-month hiatus right before the 1984 presidential election, he drew his dimwitted newsman Roland Burton Hedley taking readers on a trip through President Reagan's brain. In one panel, Hedley says, "Welcome to the mysterious world of Ronald Reagan's brain. Home of nearly 80 billion neurons, or 'marbles,' as they are known to the layman." (See Figure 12). Two dozen newspaper editors either dropped the series, postponed it until after the election or moved it to the op-ed page because it was considered too partisan and too close to election day.96

When Hedley took readers on a return trip to Reagan's brain in 1987, it elicited a similar reaction. (See Figure 13) 97 One of the newspapers, the Tallahassee (Florida) Democrat, that did not carry the series received an intense reaction from angry readers who were upset over the decision.98 About 100 people canceled their subscriptions and hundreds others called or wrote to complain. The newspaper's executive editor also received death threats and was called a fascist, twit and worse.99

When the Los Angeles Times canceled the strip satirizing the Reagan Administration officials who resigned or were fired after charges of inproprieties, 164 readers canceled their subscriptions and the newspaper received more than 600 reader complaints.100 When the Indianapolis Star did not publish one of the strips in the first Reagan brain series, it received more than 1,000 complaints.101 The San Francisco Chronicle received more than 2,000 irate calls after axing a controversial strip.102

A columnist for a Cedar Rapids, Iowa, newspaper admitted feeling embarrassed because his employer had not published a "Doonesbury" series satirizing presidential candidate Pat Robertson's connection with God.103 He, however, disagreed with telephone calls and letters to the editor that charged the newspaper with censorship. "It was simply a matter of a newspaper applying its own standards to its own product. That's something it not only has a right, but an obligation, to do."104

Conclusion

Trudeau's satire constantly tests the limits of taste, fairness, and appropriateness. But that is what satirists are supposed to do: direct their own incredulity, anger or morality at whatever most outrages them. Trudeau's field of play is not restricted to politics -- as is the case, generally, of his colleagues who draw political cartoons. He is a social satirist who mocks religion, sex and other topics that are considered by some too sacred or personal for so flip a consideration. His series, for instance, on abortion was considered so sensitive his syndicate would not distribute it. Newspaper editors also have not published strips that showed unmarried couples living together or Pat Robertson taking campaign orders from God.

He is also limited, to some degree, by his medium, which is the comic strip. Comic strips should be funny, not biting -- that is what political cartoons are for. "Doonesbury" worries editors, who have increasingly moved it from the funny papers to the editorial or op-ed pages. By using a strip, however, he is freer to make commentary on more subjects. Also, by using a comic strip, he is perceived by some as not to be taken seriously and is therefore more free perhaps to go farther with his satire.

Trudeau, like nearly all artists and writers, is limited because he has little or no freedom over whether his work is published or even bought to begin with. Newspaper editors regularly decide not to publish an offensive strip, alter it, or run it with a disclaimer. If he goes too far, he is likely to lose some of his market either temporarily or permanently. Fortunately, he is

published in enough newspapers to sustain some losses; yet, he cannot go too far too many times or risk the strip's future.

Satire also is limited by public opinion. As the audience loses interest in satire, the satire becomes expendable. While "Doonesbury" regularly tests the limits of satire, and frequently goes over the line whereupon it is restricted in one way or another, its popularity is strong enough for now so that the strip has lost little of its bite.

1 Quoted in Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, edited by Emily Morison Beck (Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1980), p. 813.
2 Edward Rosenheim, Jr., Swift and the Satirist's Art (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 12.
3 Jean H. Hagstrum, "Verbal and Visual Caricature in the Age of Dryden, Swift, and Pope," in England in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century, edited by H.T. Swedenberg Jr. 1972. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1972), p. 188-189.
4 Charles Press, The Political Cartoon (London: MacMillan Co., 1981), pp. 74,63.
5 Rosenheim, p. 29.
6 "Doonesbury's 900," Washington Journalism Review, November 1987, p. 4.
7 M. Thomas Inge, "Introduction: The Comics as Culture," Journal of Popular Culture, 12 (Spring, 1979), p. 631.
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42 "When Funnies Aren't Funny," The Washington Post, October 16, 1985, p. A22.
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44 Gloria Steinham, "Four Good Reasons for Reading this Book," introduction to Doonesbury Dossier: The Reagan Years (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1984).
45 W. Clark Hendley, "The Horatian Satire of Trudeau's Doonesbury," Journal of Popular Culture 16 (Spring, 1983), p. 115.

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47 "Sinatra Seeks List of Papers Printing 'Doonesbury' Comic," The New York Times, June 21, 1985, p. A30.
48 Ibid.
49 "An Annotated Conversation with the Author."
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Senator Warner had lost the Republic primary, however, the winner died in an airplane crash. The Warners then offered to take on his campaign debt and offered to set up a trust fund for the family. The next day, Warner became the party's nominee for the U.S. Senate. See, "An Annotated Conversation With the Author."
53 Ibid.
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55 Ibid.
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57 Quoted on back cover of Doonesbury Deluxe (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988).
58 "The Doonesbury Factor," the Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1986, section 1, p. 3.
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60 Ibid. When Brown was asked by a NBC reporter why he had solicited a contribution from someone chrocically under federal investigation, he said, "Even Jane Fonda was once invistigated by the FBI."
61 New York Times v. Sullivan, 376 U.S. 254 (1964). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Times v. Sullivan* that in order for a public official to collect damages for a libel, they had to show that it had been spoken or written with actual malice, i.e., a knowing falsity or a reckless disregard for the truth.
62 Gertz v. Robert Welch, 418 U.S. 323 (1974). The U.S. Supreme Court extended the actual malice rule to public figures.
63 Philadelphia Newspapers v. Hepps, 12 Med. L. Rptr. 1977 (1986). The U.S. Supreme Court said that a private figure involved in a matter of public interest could not recover damages unless he could show that the statement was false.
64 Gertz v. Welch, at 339-340.
65 Hustler Magazine v. Falwell, 14 Med. L. Rptr. 2285 (1988). This involved an ad parody that appeared in Hustler magazine that said that evangelist Jerry Falwell had lost his virginity with his mother in an outhouse and that he often preached while he was drunk.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Keller v. Miami Herald, 12 Med. L. Rptr. 1561, 1565 (1987).
69 See, Keller v. Miami Herald, 1561; Yorty v. Chandler, 13 Cal. App. 3d 467, 91 Cal. Rptr. 709 (1970); Palm Beach Newspapers v. Early, 334 So. 2d 50 (Fla. Dist. Ct. App. 1976), cert. denied, 439 U.S. 910 (1978); Loeb v. Globe, 489 F. Supp. 481 (D. Mass. 1980); Ferguson v. Dayton Newspapers, 7 Med. L. Rptr (BNA) 2502, (Ohio Ct. App. 1981); Miskovsky v. Tulsa Tribune, 678 P.2d 242 (Okla. 1983), cert. denied, 465 U.S. 1006 (1984); Russell v. McMillen, 685 P. 2d. 255 (Colo. Ct. App. 1984); and Reeves v. Foster, 200 So. 2d. 453 (Miss. 1967).

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71 "Doonesbury Contra Sinatra," Newsweek, June 24, 1985, p. 82.
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73 Ibid, p. 26.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 "Doonesbury Satire of Film Is Withheld," New York Times, May 25, 1985, p. A6.
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80 "Sinatra Seeks List of Papers Printing 'Doonesbury' Comic,"p. A30.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
84 "Ol' Black Eyes," Time, June 24, 1985, p. 66.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 "Doonesbury Contra Sinatra," Newsweek, June 24, 1985, p. 82.
89 Ibid.
90 "Doonesbury Strips Dropped, Edited as Controversy Grows," p. 26.
91 Andrew Radolf, "Don't Shrink the Comics," Editor and Publisher, April 30, 1988, p. 49.
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93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
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97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 "Doonesbury Series on Reagan's Brain is Pulled," p. 40.
100 "Doonesbury Strips Dropped, Edited as Controversy Grows," p. 26.
101 "Doonesburying Reagan," Newsweek, November 10, 1980, p. 121.
102 "Trudeaumania," Time, January 13, 1975, p. 49.
103 "Has Anyone Here Seen 'Doonesbury'?" Cedar Rapids Gazette, September 24, 1986, p. A2.
104 Ibid.

LACEY! DEAREST! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!
WE JUST ARRIVED, GAIL. SORRY WE'RE SO LATE!
DON'T BE SILLY! I WAS JUST AFRAID YOU WEREN'T COMING..
WELL, AS YOU KNOW, DEAR, I'M NOT WILD ABOUT FILM PEOPLE. BUT LIZ TAYLOR, WELL..
THRILLING, ISN'T IT? WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE HER! SHE'S..
WE KNOW. "A TAD OVERWEIGHT, BUT WITH VIOLET EYES TO DIE FOR."
WHY, DICK! I THOUGHT YOU JUST GOT HERE!
WE DID. THAT'S FROM ONE OF THEIR BUMPER STICKERS.
GBTrudeau

Figure 1

NOW, STOP CARRYING ON, DICK! I'M SURE JOHN WARNER GOT TO THE SENATE ON HIS OWN MERITS!
OH, C'MON, LACEY. REMEMBER WHEN THE PARTY'S ORIGINAL NOMINEE DIED IN THAT ACCIDENT?
THE WARNERS WERE SO STRICKEN WITH SYMPATHY THAT THEY OFFERED TO TAKE ON THE CAMPAIGN DEBT AND TO SET UP A TRUST FUND FOR THE FAMILY. GUESS WHO WAS THEN TAPPED THE NEXT DAY?
WELL, THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO OFFER ANYTHING, DICK..
CAN'T YOU JUST HEAR HIM MAKING HIS CASE? "I'LL SHOW YOU MY QUID IF YOU SHOW ME YOUR QUO!"
NOW, DICK, YOU'VE BEEN AROUND POLITICS LONG ENOUGH TO..
TO GROW CYNICAL? NEVER! I'M CONSTANTLY AMAZED!
GBTrudeau

Figure 2

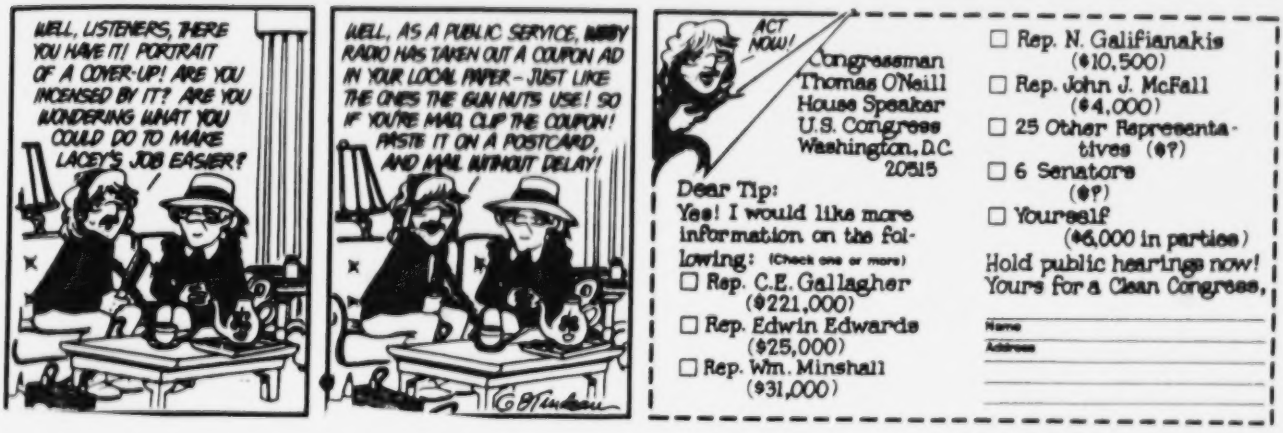
WELL, LISTENERS, THERE YOU HAVE IT! PORTRAIT OF A COVER-UP! ARE YOU INCENSED BY IT? ARE YOU WONDERING WHAT YOU COULD DO TO MAKE LACEY'S JOB EASIER?
WELL, AS A PUBLIC SERVICE, WBBY RADIO HAS TAKEN OUT A COUPON AD IN YOUR LOCAL PAPER - JUST LIKE THE ONES THE GUN NUTS USE! SO IF YOU'RE MAD, CLIP THE COUPON! PASTE IT ON A POSTCARD, AND MAIL WITHOUT DELAY!
GBTrudeau
ACT NOW!
Congressman
Thomas O'Neill
House Speaker
U.S. Congress
Washington, D.C.
20515
Dear Tip:
Yes! I would like more information on the following: (Check one or more)
☐ Rep. C.E. Gallagher ($221,000)
☐ Rep. Edwin Edwards ($25,000)
☐ Rep. Wm. Minshall ($31,000)
☐ Rep. N. Galifianakis ($10,500)
☐ Rep. John J. McFall ($4,000)
☐ 25 Other Representatives ($?)
☐ 6 Senators ($?)
☐ Yourself ($6,000 in parties)
Hold public hearings now!
Yours for a Clean Congress,
Name
Address

Figure 3

THE ECONOMY. ERA. ABORTION. DEFICITS. THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE ISSUES GEORGE BUSH HAS REVERSED HIMSELF ON TO BECOME A REAGAN TEAM PLAYER.
TO SHELTER WHAT REMAINS OF HIS CONVICTIONS, BUSH IS ABOUT TO FORMALLY PLACE HIS POLITICAL MANHOOD IN A BLIND TRUST. AND HERE COMES THE VICE PRESIDENT NOW!
MR. VICE PRESIDENT! MR. VICE PRESIDENT!
YES,, ROLAND?
SIR, WILL YOUR MANHOOD BE EARNING INTEREST?
VERY LITTLE. THERE'S NOT THAT MUCH CAPITAL.

Figure 4

WE'RE BACK, CAMPERS. MY PRODUCER JAKE AND I WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT THE LATEST ADMINISTRATION SCANDAL, THIS ONE INVOLVING CIVIL RIGHTS CHIEF CLARENCE PENDLETON.
IT REMINDED ME THAT IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR AN UPDATE OF OUR RUNNING TALLY OF REAGAN APPOINTEES CHARGED WITH LEGAL OR ETHICAL MISCONDUCT.
SO HERE IT IS, THE DEFINITIVE LIST OF BACK-SCRATCHERS, TILL-DIPPERS, AND CONSCIENCE-CUTTERS, THE UNABRIDGED 1986 "SLEAZE ON PARADE"!
UH-OH...
LET'S WADE IN UP TO OUR ARMPITS, SHALL WE?
SWITCH TO 5-SECOND DELAY!

Figure 5

GOOD EVENING, AND WELCOME TO "SILENT SCREAM II: THE PREQUEL."
IN "SILENT SCREAM I," WE SHOWED YOU THE TERMINATION OF A 12-WEEK-OLD PREGNANCY. TONIGHT, WE'LL BE WITNESSING THE END OF A 12-MINUTE-OLD PREGNANCY.
THROUGH THE MAGIC OF FIBER-OPTICS, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO TAKE A COMPUTER-ENHANCED PHOTO OF THE CHILD IN REPOSE. AS YET, HE IS UNAWARE OF THE DANGER HE FACES.
LET'S CALL HIM "TIMMY."

Figure 6

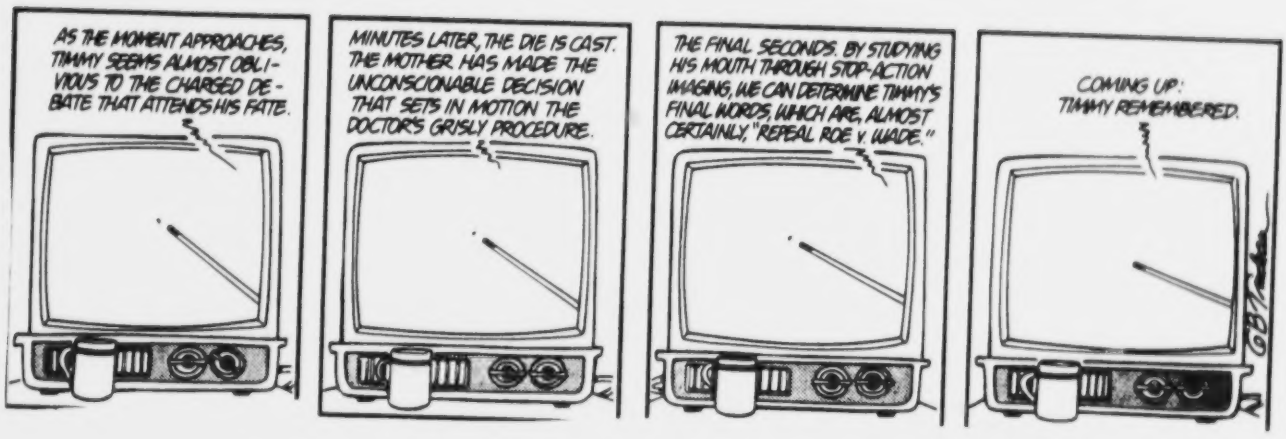
AS THE MOMENT APPROACHES, TIMMY SEEMS ALMOST OBLIVIOUS TO THE CHARGED DEBATE THAT ATTENDS HIS FATE.
MINUTES LATER, THE DIE IS CAST. THE MOTHER HAS MADE THE UNCONSCIONABLE DECISION THAT SETS IN MOTION THE DOCTOR'S GRISLY PROCEDURE.
THE FINAL SECONDS. BY STUDYING HIS MOUTH THROUGH STOP-ACTION IMAGING, WE CAN DETERMINE TIMMY'S FINAL WORDS, WHICH ARE, ALMOST CERTAINLY, "REPEAL ROE V. WADE."
COMING UP: TIMMY REMEMBERED.

Figure 7

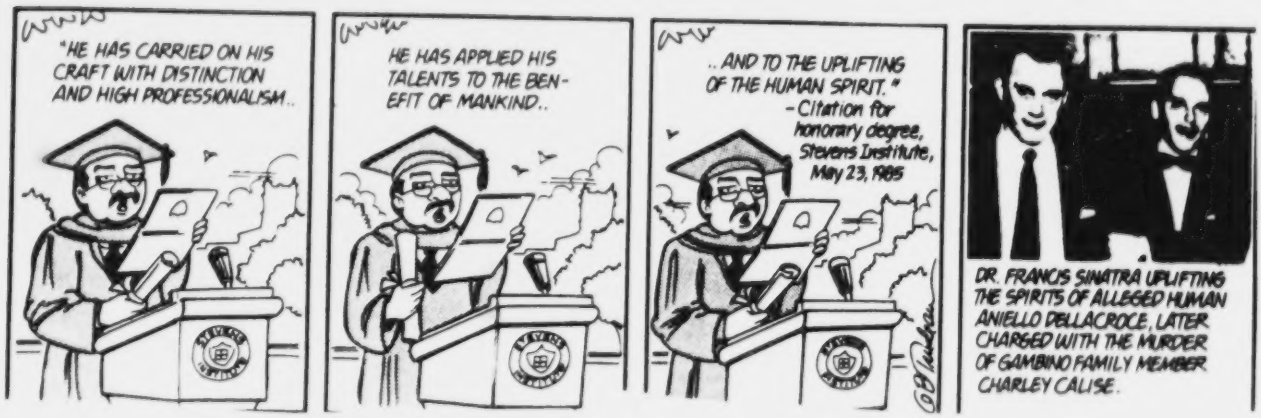
"HE HAS CARRIED ON HIS CRAFT WITH DISTINCTION AND HIGH PROFESSIONALISM.."
HE HAS APPLIED HIS TALENTS TO THE BENEFIT OF MANKIND..
.. AND TO THE UPLIFTING OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT."
- Citation for honorary degree, Stevens Institute, May 23, 1985
DR. FRANCIS SINATRA UPLIFTING THE SPIRITS OF ALLEGED HUMAN ANIELLO DELLACROCE, LATER CHARGED WITH THE MURDER OF GAMBINO FAMILY MEMBER CHARLEY CALISE.

Figure 8

WHADDYA MEAN, YA GOTTA SHUFFLE? DEAL, SISTER!
I'M SORRY, DR. SINATRA, THOSE ARE THE HOUSE RULES.
READ MY LIPS, HONEY! I SAID, DEAL THE CARDS!
I COULD LOSE MY JOB, DR. SINATRA.
YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT YOU COULD LOSE YOUR JOB! GET ME YOUR (EXPLETIVE) BOSS!
BUT..
GET ME YOUR (OBSCENE GERUND) BOSS, YOU LITTLE (ANATOMICALLY EXPLICIT EPITHET)!
OBSCENE GERUND?

Figure 9

YES, THIS IS YOUR LIFE, HENRY KISSINGER"! AND WHAT A GLAMOROUS LIFE IT'S BEEN! HERE TO TELL US ABOUT YOUR SALAD DAYS, ONE OF YOUR OLD GIRL-FRIENDS - MS. MARLO THOMAS!
YEA!
CLAP!
CLAP!
CLAP!
WELCOME, MARLO! TELL US - WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT HENRY KISSINGER TODAY, WHAT ARE YOU REMINDED OF?!
RALPH, I'M REMINDED OF THE MANY CHILDREN WHO WERE MAIMED AND KILLED DURING THE CHRISTMAS BOMBINGS OF BACH MAI HOSPITAL!
BUT... THAT'S.. THAT'S AWFUL!
YOU BET! WHY DO YOU THINK WE STOPPED DATING?

Figure 10

GOOD NEWS, KIDDIES! TIME FOR ANOTHER EXCLUSIVE WBBY "WATERGATE PROFILE"! TODAY'S OBITUARY - JOHN MITCHELL!
JOHN MITCHELL, THE FORMER U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL, HAS IN RECENT WEEKS BEEN REPEATEDLY LINKED WITH BOTH THE WATERGATE CAPER AND ITS COVER-UP.
IT WOULD BE A DISSERVICE TO MR. MITCHELL AND HIS CHARACTER TO PREJUDGE THE MAN, BUT EVERYTHING KNOWN TO DATE COULD LEAD ONE TO CONCLUDE HE'S GUILTY!
THAT'S GUILTY! GUILTY, GUILTY, GUILTY!!

Figure 11

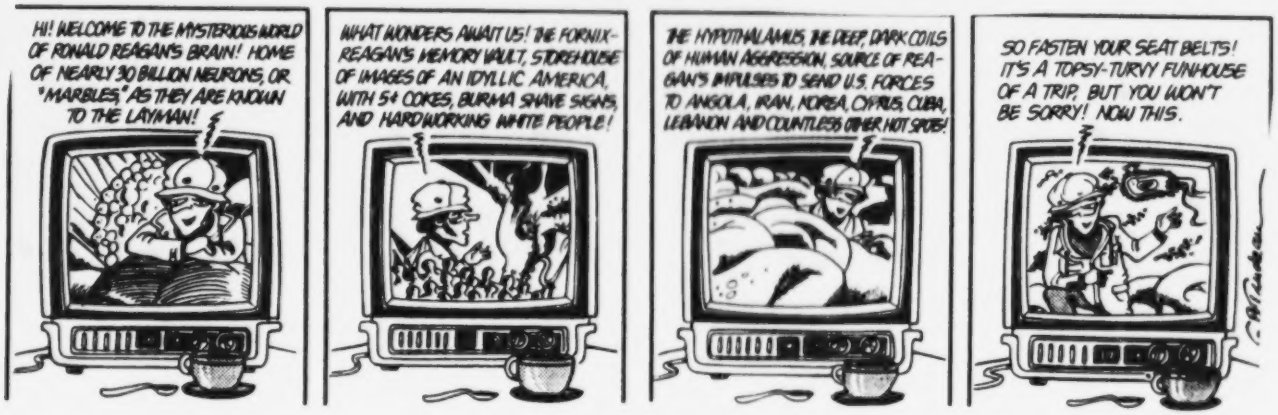
HI! WELCOME TO THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF RONALD REAGAN'S BRAIN! HOME OF NEARLY 30 BILLION NEURONS, OR "MARBLES," AS THEY ARE KNOWN TO THE LAYMAN!
WHAT WONDERS AWAIT US! THE FORNIX - REAGAN'S MEMORY VAULT, STOREHOUSE OF IMAGES OF AN IDYLLIC AMERICA, WITH 5¢ COKES, BURMA SHAVE SIGNS, AND HARD WORKING WHITE PEOPLE!
THE HYPOTHALAMUS, THE DEEP, DARK COILS OF HUMAN AGGRESSION, SOURCE OF REAGAN'S IMPULSES TO SEND U.S. FORCES TO ANGOLA, IRAN, KOREA, CYPRUS, CUBA, LEBANON AND COUNTLESS OTHER HOT SPOTS!
SO FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS! IT'S A TOPSY-TURVY FUNHOUSE OF A TRIP, BUT YOU WON'T BE SORRY! NOW THIS.

Figure 12

GOOD EVENING. FOR FOUR MONTHS NOW, WASHINGTON HAS BEEN MESMERIZED BY THE PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS TO REMEMBER HIS ROLE IN THE IRANIAN AFFAIR.
CAN THESE MEMORIES EVER BE RETRIEVED? DO THEY IN FACT EXIST? FOLLOW ALONG AS WE TRY TO BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE IN...
THE RETURN TO REAGAN'S BRAIN!
WHO? WHAT? WHEN?
THWIT!

Figure 13